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MEMORANDUM

HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE

FOREWORD

This assessment of the Human Rights performance of foreign countries over the past year and a half, requested by the DCI, is in two parts. The first is an overview of worldwide trends, which emphasizes the degree to which there has been change in the practices of foreign countries since 1976. This is followed by regional sections, which attempt to place foreign practices and indications of change into the context both of the countries' history and political culture and of their relations with the US.

For the purposes of this paper we have identified "human rights" as including governmental unwillingness to condone: (1) torture; (2) cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; (3) arbitrary arrest or imprisonment; (4) denial of fair public trial; (5) invasion of the home. They also connote governmental respect for freedom of: (6) thought, speech, press, religion and assembly; (7) movement within the country, foreign travel and emigration; and (8) participation in the political process. Finally (9) they imply a government's willingness to tolerate international and nongovernmental investigation of alleged violations of human rights. We have not included evaluations of economic performances within the scope of this paper, although we recognize that there is an economic dimension to the term human rights as it is commonly used. Moreover, only independent foreign countries with more than 175,000 inhabitants have been evaluated.

Regarding ratings, we judge generally good those countries with endemic problems in no more than one or two areas of human rights; as spotty those with problems in several areas; and as poor those with problems in all or nearly all areas.

The views expressed in this paper represent the best judgments of ORPA analysts and have not been coordinated with other components of the Agency. We are aware that, for many countries, assessing the state of human rights practices, and even the direction they are taking, is both complex and controversial. It is extremely difficult to place 100 or so 3.5(c)

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countries into a few categories to the satisfaction of ORPA analysts, let alone observers elsewhere. Some changes for the better that we describe may not be thought significant by others. In any case, the changes may not prove lasting; they may not withstand the litmus test that the authoritarian governments which rule most countries of the world tend to apply to improvements in human rights practices: the extent to which these may complicate domestic security problems and even general political problems for the governments in power.

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In Argentina the human rights issue continues to cause strains with the US. Senior Argentine officials view human rights abuses as an unfortunate but inevitable consequence of intense efforts to eradicate leftist terrorism, and under these circumstances resent efforts by foreign critics to portray the Argentine Government as an oppressive dictatorship. Now that the terrorist threat seems to be abating, the government is attempting to wind down its massive security operations and to exercise tighter controls over police and military units. It has ordered release of many prisoners to their relatives during daylight hours. The Interior Minister recently warned police chiefs to stop bullying the public and to restore normal procedures and the government has strengthened requirements for proper police identification. In an effort to appease its critics, the government has published several lists of those arrested and under detention and is making a more concerted effort to locate missing persons. Nevertheless, thousands of prisoners are still being held under state of siege provisions which deny them benefits of trial and due process. The fact that there are still occasional reports of disappearances, torture, and death indicates that the government is either unable or unwilling to bring all elements of the security forces under full control. NR

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